

Flight Program



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Recent trip to Haiti changes lives...



Tom with Joel at Petionville Orphanage



Midley showing off his new 5 Pillars bracelet



Tom, Davidson, and Rob dressed up for church

On January 12th, 2010, an earthquake rocked the nation of Haiti. With a magnitude of 7.0, the quake left nothing but destruction in its path. The people of Haiti were devastated. But we, too, are devastated. From December 27th to January 3rd, Rob and I, along with 15 volunteers from Carlisle Brethren in Christ Church, were in Haiti. We visited 7 orphanages and brought joy and happiness to each and every child we met. Although we did not know the language very well, we quickly found out that love means the same in every language; and no matter which words come out of someone's mouth, a smile will always translate the same.

Rob and I spent 7 days visiting the girls and boys of the following orphanages: AFCA, Good Samaritan, Freedom House, Petionville, Love and Grace, Leogane, and Cite Solei. I will never forget any of the children's faces, but I don't have enough space to write about each of them. All I will say is that I love them with all of my heart.

Leogane and Petionville were the most challenging for me. Leogane rocked me because of the overall condition of the children there. By simply glancing at Leogane Orphanage's population, I noticed several disturbing sights. Almost every child there had a bloated stomach from malnutrition. Also, many others had worms, anemia, iron deficiency (yellow eyes), scabies, and infectious wounds. It was normal for a child to go 2 days without eating, so needless to say, they were all starving. By holding a child in my arms, I could feel every bone in his body, and I could see his heart beating through his little chest. However, we did our best to show them a good time. We played games, we laughed, we worshiped, and we showed all of them the purest form of unconditional love.

On our second visit, we brought \$1,000 worth of food (along with an abundance of clothes, hygienic materials, and blankets) and \$700 worth of medicine for the needy kids of Leogane. It was hard to say goodbye to those children, not knowing if they will survive until my return trip to Haiti.

Petionville was also a struggle for me. The condition of the orphanage was staggering. There were about 70 children, but only enough space for about 30. Many of the children slept on concrete. Even those who were lucky enough to sleep on a bed had to share it with one or two others.

Before leaving Haiti, we made a second trip to Petionville. When we got there, all they had left in their food pantry was half a bag of rice...if we hadn't brought food, they would have been using half a bag of rice to feed 70 kids. I met a little boy by the name of Joel. He couldn't have been more than 6 years old. I spent the whole day holding him in my arms, spinning him around, holding him upside down, and giving him all the love I had in my heart. When time came to leave, I had to put Joel down and say goodbye. He did not like that, so he began to cry; his cries were deafening, and it wasn't long before tears began streaming down my face. I wiped them away, got out of the truck and picked Joel up. I hugged him so hard I thought I was going to break him. I wiped his tears away and told him everything was going to be all right. He latched on as if he wanted me to stay forever, but I knew

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A LUTHERAN FAMILY & COMMUNITY MINISTRY

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Haiti (continued from page 1)...

my team was waiting for me. I gave Joel a kiss on the head. I said, "Mweh renmen ou," which means, "I love you." As I put him down again, I saw the tears return to his eyes and he began to bawl. I climbed into the truck with my team and cried as I listened to the sound of a child bawling his eyes out because I wasn't there to hold him.

It's stories like those that pop into my head every time I see Haiti on the news. I remember the faces of the children; their smiles. I remember how it felt to hold them, and how it felt when it was time to say goodbye. So when you hear about Haiti on the news, don't change the channel. Listen and watch, for we are all children of God, and our brothers and sisters in Haiti need our help.

Thank you for your support,

Thomas C Kemper



Dining with Diakon

One of our very own, Brandon Kelbaugh, was recently honored with the opportunity to represent the Flight program as one of 11 competing chefs in the annual Dining with Diakon Chef Challenge. This fundraiser is held each April and all donations benefit the Diakon Wilderness Center. Brandon will be creating a delicious Pasta Carbonara dish to be enjoyed by all. We'll keep you posted as the event draws closer.

Celebrating Success Together



On December 19th, the Flight guys, Rob's family, and I all went to Harrisburg to watch him be recognized for his academic accomplishments over the last five years. We waited and tried to find Rob in the big crowd there. Finally we spotted him and once his name was called and he went on the stage to receive his Associate Degree, we all stood up and screamed and yelled. Afterwards, we all went to out to eat together. There was snow storm that day and most of the graduating students and their families didn't make it, but all of us did! I learned that no matter how long it takes, anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

Thanks for your support,

Brandon Kelbaugh

Flight Receives Wilderness First Aid Certification



Tom's simulated puncture wound

Flight Participants successfully received certification in Wilderness First Aid through Wilderness Medical Associates. This challenging 16-hour course provided a mix of both lecture and rescue scenarios performed outdoors in order to create the most realistic situations, complete with cold weather and down-pouring rain! With this three-year certification, participants now know what to do with a medical emergency when help is miles away and calling 911 isn't an option. Our participants are prepared for emergency situations that involve prolonged patient care, severe environments, and improvised equipment. These skills can be used in such areas as the wilderness, hostile environments, and areas of very limited resources. In addition to the intense scenarios and written exam, participants also practiced injections on one

another in order to be prepared and compe-

to handle anaphylaxis in the field. A description of the weekend is listed below:

Day 1: 8 hours - Registration, Introduction; Patient Assessment System; CPR; Circulatory System; Nervous System; Respiratory System; Fractures, Stable Injuries; Splints 1-Extremities

Day 2: 8 hours - Hypothermia; Hyperthermia and Heat Illness; Near Drowning; Lightning Injuries; Wounds and Burns; Anaphylaxis; Lifting, Moving Extrication; Patient Carries; Backcountry Medicine

Great job guys!



Jared assessing his patient

Finishing the Year Strong...



Roofing and site clean-up at worksite

We spent the holiday season focused on the needs of others. We volunteered on another Habitat for Humanity project and sharpened our roofing skills, insulated the basement, and finished off the day with some much needed site clean-up. We're looking forward to continuing our relationship with this worthwhile cause in 2010.



What better place to take in the sites and sounds of the holidays than New York City? Our weekend in the Big Apple took us to the top of Rockefeller Center, the 9/11 memorial and Chinatown. Trains, subways, hot dogs from the street vendors... what an unforgettable experience!



Flight at Times Square

Who we are:

We are the Flight Program. We are a group of young men who made poor choices when we were younger and ended up getting sent to placement at the Diakon Wilderness Center. Most of us have been in and out of the system, placements, and detention centers. That was the past.

Today is our future. Today we are voluntarily participating in the Flight Program, and we're taking new and challenging steps in our lives to change and become successful. We rely on one another for support. We attempt to do what is right, not what is easy. We now look towards the future and our goals instead of living "in the moment." We want the best that this world has to offer and we're now ready to go after it, the honorable way. We are separating from our old friends. They don't know what to think of us anymore. Our families don't know us anymore. They're impressed. Our old teachers, probation officers, and everyone else in our communities (that we struggled to understand) will soon see that we're going to make it.

We now have positive dreams and goals. We believe in helping others along the path to success: "*As Iron Sharpens Iron, So One Person Sharpens Another.*" We are discovering and using the tools and resources in our communities to achieve our goals. We are breaking free from our comfort zones and *Soaring to New Heights*.

We sacrifice our weekends to be with our brothers. We let go of the old Friday night parties, now we spend that time helping each other and the community. We're not afraid to cry in front of each other. We're not afraid to ask for help. We dropped that front. Fridays and Saturdays are now about positive people, places, and things. We're on the move, in and out of state, going to new events, eating new foods, meeting new people, hiking new trails, and always... telling our stories.

Meet Chris:



I was adjudicated to the Diakon Wilderness Center on December 29th of 2008 with an expected two-month review. In those first 2 months I didn't take everything seriously, so when I went back to court for my review I was told that because I didn't *change* and take it as seriously as I should have, I ended up having to complete my entire 4 months. That really threw me off at first but then I started to grow up and mature. I acquired good friendships there with Chef Michelle, Dave Russell, and Dan Keith who helped me see that I needed to mature and change my life. But the one who helped me the most was Rob Kivlan. It seemed like he was there 8 days a week.

At the end of my stay, Rob approached me about the Flight Program and I knew that anything run by him and associated with Diakon would benefit me extremely. I jumped in with blind faith. Even after being accepted, problems at home persisted and I wasn't able to go to as many weekends as I wanted; but they still treated me as a brother and continued to support me. This gave me strength, since I was living in a very unhappy and unsupportive home.

As things at home became worse and out of my control, I tuned to alcohol to cope, but it only ended up making me depressed. It got so bad that on August 8th I tried to commit suicide. At the time, I saw this as my only way out. During the middle of it I realized that it was really a selfish act. I called Rob and he called 911. I was admitted to the mental health unit at the hospital for 3 weeks. During that time Rob, my probation officer, and Lauren Conzaman from Diakon Adoption and Foster Care

helped find a loving foster parent for me to live with. My new foster parent, Ms. Becky, was amazing. The best part was during this time Rob and the Flight Program kept in touch and continued to support me. I felt safe and loved.

I was able to later move in with another loving family who supported me for the next 3 months. During that time I was able to fully participate and remain active with Flight and the guys. I got to talk with everyone about life and we helped each other become better people. I got to go to the beach, Arizona, Washington DC, and help people through Habitat for Humanity. They helped me get into college. Actually, they convinced me.

Flight helped me get a scholarship and now I'm finally somewhere in my life that I never thought I would be. I am now happy and content with my life, sober, and pursuing my dreams. Flight continues to be my only support system and has helped me mature and see that the world is a good place and can be even better with me in it.

Thanks for your Support,

Chris Skates



The Flight Program is currently accepting applications. For more information, contact Rob Kivlan at Diakon Wilderness Center.

Phone: (717) 903-5102

Email: kivlanr@Diakon.org

Be sure to look for us on Facebook, keywords "Diakon Lutheran" or "Diakon Flight."

Interested in donating to the Flight Program? Simply visit this page on the Web: www.diakon.org/DonationForm.asp, and select "Flight Program."

Flight Program
Diakon Wilderness Center
571 Mountain Rd.
Boiling Springs, PA 17050

*Soaring
to New
Heights*